

New claim 10 depends from claim 1 and recites that the protuberances have bases and peaks and gradually decreasing diameter from the bases to the peaks.

New claim 11 recites that the water absorbability of the protuberances and the areas between the protuberances is substantially equal. Support for this change can be found in the manner by which the protuberances are produced. That is, the protuberances and areas between the protuberances can be made using the technique illustrated in Fig. 3, in which case the water absorbability of the protuberances and the areas between the protuberances will be substantially equal.

New claim 12 recites that the cross section of the nonwoven fiber is in the form of undulations which continue in at least one direction. Support for this change can be readily found in Fig. 2.

Entry of the changes to claim 1 is respectfully requested.

Claims 1-3 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 4,100,324 to Anderson et al.

Claims 6-8 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Anderson et al.

Anderson et al. teaches a composite web that may be embossed either ultrasonically or at an elevated temperature to that the thermoplastic microfibers are flattened into a film-like structure.

The film-like structure has opposed planar surfaces so that when embossed, the final cross-sectional shape has flat opposed surfaces with flat recessed areas as depicted in Fig. 4 of Anderson et al.

The peaked curved shape of the protuberances of the present invention provides for point contact when the nonwoven fabric is used to clean or wipe a surface.

In contrast, Anderson et al.'s nonwoven fabric would provide flat contact areas when the nonwoven fabric is used to clean or wipe a surface.

In addition to providing flat surface contact areas, Anderson et al. includes embossed areas 43 which would necessarily have extremely poor of at least limited water absorbability due to the manner in which the embossed areas 43 are formed by an intense web calendaring action.

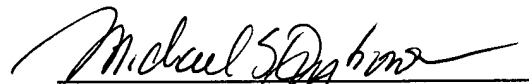
In contrast to Anderson et al., applicants' nonwoven fabric has a substantially uniform water absorbability throughout the protuberances and areas in between due to the manner in which the fabric and protuberances are formed, i.e. without fusing or melting the thermoplastic synthetic fibers.

It is believed that the changes presented herein to the claims distinguishes over the prior art relied upon by the Examiner.

Accordingly, entry of the present Preliminary Amendment and an early allowance of the application are earnestly solicited.

To the extent necessary, a petition for an extension of time under 37 CFR §1.136 is hereby made. Please charge the fees due in connection with the filing of this paper, including extension of time fees, to Deposit Account No. 02-0385 and please credit any excess fees to such deposit account.

Respectfully submitted,



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